The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

Books are the ever-burning lamps of accumulated wisdom.

WHOLE NO. 841. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1927. VOL. 17, NO. 10.

LABOR MUST BE ALERT TO INDUSTRIAL CHANGES

Economic forces are driving this country to a five-day work week.

Scientific processes, labor-displacing machinery and mass production have revolutionized industry. Skill, in an increasing number of industries, has been replaced by studied motion to feed high-speared machines.

Systems are so finely organized that 100 per cent production means a glutted market, as present wage standards make it impossible to buy back these commodities.

Practically every basic industry is in this position, while employers talk of "stabilizing production." This is the latest defense for restriction of output.

It is folly to talk of old hours of work and a bare living wage under the new system.

It may be said that displaced workers can adapt themselves to other callings. This reasoning is unsound because the new revolution is not local. No calling is escaping the operation of scientific processes. It includes every phase of industrial production.

It is equally futile to talk of workers "going back to the land." Farmers are struggling against low prices, overproduction, excessive land prices, mortgages and increased farm tenantry that tends to serfdom.

We are in a new period of industrial production, but the limit is still before us. Discoveries in chemistry and the application of hydro-electric power, both in their infancy, will bring more wondrous changes.

The operation of these forces make a reduction of working hours and an increase in wage standards both certain and necessary.

It is not well for workers to assume a fatalistic attitude toward these questions or to hope that their share of gains in production economies will be handed them without effort on their part.

If workers are not alert to silent, resistless changes in industry, if they do not keep in close touch with the operation of forces that are being chained to do man's will, they will be lured by panaceas. Then will come evil days to those who work for wages.

OIL INDUSTRY CZAR TO CONTROL OUTPUT

New York, May 21.—Representatives of oil companies in the bonanza pool Seminole, located in Oklahoma, have given one man arbitrary power to limit production in that field.

This is the first time such action has been taken in an American basic industry, but the public is assured it is only for two weeks.

Financial interests believe this is a preliminary move to test public opinion and whether the Department of Justice will ignore the action or make a gesture in the form of court proceedings.

A committee that will study plans to limit production "in all producing areas in which there is a prospect of large new development," is also appointed.

The conference was called by the president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and is the result of overproduction in the Seminole and other fields that has demoralized the market. Prices have been reduced, although this lut has hardly reached owners of automobiles. Efforts have been made to secure government aid, but this would be a reversal of the position taken by men who opposed relief for farmers, as provided by the bill that was vetoed by the President.

WAGE CUTS FORCED ON ITALIAN LABOR

New York, May 21.—Cable dispatches announce that Italian workers face a 10 per cent wage cut. The reduction will be "asked for" by representatives of the Facist unions who are appointed by Mussolini. The dictator will then applaud the patriotism of the workers and comply with their request.

This is the same system worked by managers of American company "unions." The advantage of this scheme is that it places the responsibility on the men's so-called representatives, rather than on employers or the government.

Italian employers, the cables state, are "expected to reduce their prices." It is significant, however, that retailers and middlemen are blaming each other for high costs. Both may escape responsibility. The reduced wage scales will be established for a comparatively long period of time, according to a government newspaper, as it is Mussolini's wish that "the new wage contracts permit business an ample margin of time to adjust itself to the new financial situation and the difficulties of international competition."

METAL POLISHERS UNITE

Fort Wayne, Ind., May 21.—Metal polishers in this city organized and affiliated to the Metal Polishers' International Union.

LABOR MOVEMENT NOT BOUND TO ONE SET STRUCTURE PLAN

Washington, May 21.—"The A. F. of L. is not committed to any single type of union structure. We leave that to the judgment of the workers, who best know the situation they must meet," said William Green, A. F. of L. president, writing in American Federationist, current issue.

"In those industries where processes and machinery have been standardized as mass production necessitates, craft skill has disappeared from the fabrication, and workers are finding new groupings for union organization. The important thing is the continuing necessity for labor organization and finding cohesive ties that will make the union constructive and permanent."

President Green points out that when machinery or machine tools replace hand tools and hand work, much or all of the old skill is no longer used and the worker has to develop new skill in the control of his machine and the use of materials.

"Because machinery has not the adjustability of the human worker, the job is divided into a number of operations. As the operations performed by the workers in the shop together make up the completed product, there comes a new work interdependence among the workers which, expressed through adequate organization, becomes appreciation of the unity of the shop.

"Under such conditions the shop or plant naturally constitutes the union basis."

GREATER PRODUCTION WITH FEWER WORKERS

New York, May 21.—Increased efficiency and greater production with less employes is the record of American industry during 1919-25, according to a weekly bulletin issued by the financial house of Spencer Trask & Co.

During this period the number of wage earners decreased 7 per cent and factory output "increased probably about 30 per cent."

This efficiency, it is stated, has made such rapid strides in recent years that net profits, which were growing rapidly on account of increasing volume, have been greatly augmented.

"There is no question but that greater economies and efficiency can still be accomplished in many lines, but it is doubtful if the results will be as impressive as in the recent past. Reports of railroad operations for the first two months show surprising improvement over the corresponding period of last year. A larger volume of traffic was handled with some less 10,000 freight cars; the net ton miles handled daily per car increased from 492 to 515; train loads increased from 727 tons to 760 tons, and the traffic density from 5,264 to 5,484 tons."

The bulletin states that the workers' share of factory products were no larger, from the standpoint of proportionate value, in 1925 than in 1919, although annual per capita earnings of factory workers were 10 per cent larger.

MUSSOLINI HAS CRUDE SYSTEM

Mussolini's arbitrary 10 per cent wage reduction enforced on Italian workers does not appeal to low-wage advocates in the United States. The system is unscientific and is liable to arouse antagonisms because it depends on brute force.

One New York financial paper gives this hint to the Italian dictator:

"In other countries wage reductions have come, but they have seldom been consciously endured or immediately enforced. The changes have been gradual, insidious and often concealed from those compelled to make the sacrifices."

HOW ABOUT EQUITY LAW?

Lawyers who seek to prevent the "effective operation of criminal law" were criticised by the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court before the American Law Institute at their Washington meeting.

"No lover of his country can have gone through the last three or four years without having been stirred deep in his heart over the failure of the administration of our criminal law," he said.

How about justice and their application of equity law?

How can any law be respected when judges, sitting in equity, deny the most primitive rights to workers whenever the dollar is involved?

Who can say one section of law may be flouted and other sections respected?

Land Promoters and Financiers Most Costly Part of Building

New York, May 21.—Of each dollar of the average rent payer's money, 55 cents goes as interest and 17 cents to pay off the mortgage, so that only 10 cents is left for taxes and 18 cents for maintenance and repairs.

Arthur C. Holden, author of "Primer of Housing," thus shatters the stock argument that "high" wages is responsible for excessive housing costs. Mr. Holden is director of the Architects' Small House Service Bureau of the United States. His book is published by the Workers' Education Bureau Press.

Mr. Holden shows that for every dollar put into construction, 21.5 cents, on the average, goes for land and its improvement, 27 cents to promoters and financiers, and 25 cents for materials delivered at the job. Workers on the job receive about 26.5 per cent of every dollar invested in the operations. This is less than received by the promoters and financiers. The workers' share is divided as follows:

Carpenters, 8.5 cents; bricklayers, 6.7 cents; laborers, 2.3 cents; plasterers, 2.3 cents; hod carriers, 2 cents; plumbers, 2 cents; painters, 1.7 cents; electricians, seventenths of 1 cent; all others, 1 cent.

Pastor Evicted From Company House; Refused To Defend Anti-Union Plan

Pittsburgh, Pa., May 21.—Rev. William Gilbert Nowell, pastor of the Fawcett Methodist Episcopal Church at Hills Station, has been evicted from a company house owned by the Pittsburgh Coal Company following his refusal to preach the anti-union gospel of this corporation.

The coal company signed the Jacksonville agreement with the United Mine Workers and later repudiated its contract.

Writing to a local newspaper, Rev. Nowell said that while he favored the union he did not take sides and that he declined "to view the matter from the company's angle." He was called to the office of H. M. White, field manager for the company, who "advised him to consider the question from the company's standpoint.

"Allowing ho misunderstanding as to my views, which were in favor of organized labor, I left the office with no little resentment on their part as to my attitude," the clergyman said.

"From that time on my actions and associations have been spotted by men of the Pittsburgh Coal Company, as admitted by several employes. Everywhere I went and everything I did was noted and carried to the authorities.

"Thursday afternoon, April 28, Mr. White again had a coal and iron policeman inform me he wanted to see me at the office of the company. I went in. Replying to a question from Mr. White whether I was of the same mind as previously, I admitted I was. Whereupon he informed me that I was wasting my time in this community in my effort to bring together the union and non-union groups or in attempting to bring about a reconciliation."

Because of the clergyman's refusal to make his pulpit an annex to the anti-union concern, he was told that he would forfeit any "favors" the company had bestowed upon him.

Rev. Nowell is married and has a year-old baby. He will be difficult for me to carry on the work if I have to find a house elsewhere," said the courageous minister. "Once out, I will be subject to the trespass rules, the same as anyone else, and it may not be easy for me to come and go among the members of the Hills congregation. There are no houses vacant close at hand and I will have to leave the immediate community."

SHORTER WORK WEEK AN ECONOMIC NEED

Eugene, Ore., May 21.—The five-day week as an economic necessity within 10 years, was predicted by Prof. James Gilbert of the School of Economics, University of Oregon, in an address to the Central Labor Union.

The speaker quoted figures to show the increased annual production per man in basic industries. To prove the value of legitimate trade unions, he compared wages in the lumber industry where men have regular trade unions and where they are dominated by company "unions."

Pagan Concept That Labor Degrades Strong Factor Against Wage Workers

Des Moines, Iowa, May 21.—The pagan concept that labor is menial and beneath the dignity of free citizens subconsciously lurks in the minds of the middle classes and the professional salaried groups, declared Rev. Fr. Francis J. Haas, Ph. D., of St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, in an address to the National Conference of Social Work.

This pagan concept has resulted, notwithstanding the moderating spirit of Christianity," in a false glorification of the white-collar occupations and correspondingly adverse attitude, if not contempt, for those who labor with their hands, said Fr. Haas.

Leading up to the recommendation that priests and ministers give greater aid to workers, the speaker analyzed certain obstacles to trade unionism. He gave chief place to the contempt held for those doing manual work and for the weaker elements of society.

"The large reserves of concentrated capital are drawn upon in various ways to prevent the spread of organization. These include the financing of undercover men, card indexes and blacklists, propaganda bureaus, funds for legislation and paternalistic welfare schemes."

Because of the difficulties in securing legislation for labor and because "the general welfare requires that the State should not do for its citizens what they should do for themselves," the working people must and should rely upon the labor union and collective bargaining to attain economic independence for themselves and their families," Fr. Haas said.

The speaker referred to court decisions restricting the labor movement as strengthening a belief that labor is "out of harmony" with American ideas of justice," and to news and editorial columns of newspapers subtlely or openly attacking the working people.

"The church is within her jurisdiction when she opposes this false and pernicious attitude," said Fr. Haas. He called upon churches and priests and ministers to assume a sane attitude toward the dignity of labor.

SYNDICALISM LAW UPHELD BY COURT

Washington, May 21.—The United States Supreme Court upheld the California syndicalism law in a unanimous opinion. The conviction of Miss Charlotte Anita Whitney and Wm. Burns were sustained.

A third case, involving the syndicalism law of Kansas, was remanded back to the courts of that state on the question of procedure.

The Supreme Court said that freedom of speech does not permit unbridled license for every possible use of language.

Under the California law the term "criminal syndicalism" is defined as any doctrine advocating the commission of crime, sabotage or unlawful acts of force or methods as a means of accomplishing change in industrial ownership or control or affecting any political change. Any person who assists in organizing or is a member of such organization is guilty of a felony.

Miss Whitney was charged with having assisted in organizing the California branch of the Communist Labor Party, affiliated with the Communist Internationale at Moscow.

FAVOR MORE EDUCATION

Springfield, Ill., May 21.—A House committee has made a favorable report on a measure that will raise education standards in the State.

The bill provides that working certificates shall not be granted to children between the ages of 14 and 16 unless the applicant has passed the eighth grade in school.

DEFEAT DEATH PENALTY

Lansing, Mich., May 21.—The State Senate refused to enact a capital punishment law. The vote was 20 to 10. The death penalty has not been used in this State for 86 years.

GREEN WARNS LABOR AGAINST "RED" PLEA

Washington, May 21.—President Green warns the trade union movement against responding to an appeal by Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, who signs himself "secretary National Committee, Needle Trades Section, Trade Union Educational League."

The funds are to be used by the Communist section of the New York City furriers and garment workers.

"The appeal has been sent broadcast and because it is directed to the membership of organized labor, I deem it my duty," President Green said, "to warn you against the false statements contained in it, of its misleading character, and to urge you to refuse to make any contribution to Mr. Gitlow or his Communistic group.

"The leaders of this movement have denounced the A. F. of L. and its officers. Many engaged in this destructive work have committed perjury and have sought, through reprehensible methods, to substitute Communism for trade unionism."

The Gitlow appeal states that the Communists have incurred a large expense through the employment of Frank P. Walsh as attorney. President Green says the A. F. of L. is in no way responsible for this expense and that trade unionists can not consistently assist a movement that has openly declared its purpose to destroy organized labor.

POWER TRUST WOULD GRAB GREAT FALLS, IN POTOMAC

Washington, May 21.—A recently-organized Delaware corporation has applied to the Government for permission to build a huge hydro-electric plant on the Potomac river and its tributaries near this city. It is proposed to furnish power and light to the Nation's Capital and surrounding territory. Cleveland and Chicago capitalists are said to be behind the project that will be linked up with the power trust.

The application promises to intensify the fight for Government control of this resource at the next session of Congress. Dams on the Potomac River at Great Falls will be associated with Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam.

"CHEAP JOHN" METHODS HARM BUILDING TRADES

New York, May 21.—"Cheap John" methods in the building industry tend to cheapen construction and shorten the lives of buildings, according to Irving T. Bush, president of the Bush Terminal Company.

"Since the war," said Mr. Bush, "there has crept into the industry a new type of building. In the desire to keep down rents the appearance of many buildings has been depreciated and the high standard one might expect has not been maintained."

PEACE IN BUILDING TRADES

Seattle, May 21.—For the first time in many years the Building Trades Council and the Associated General Contractors signed a wage agreement that insures peace in this industry.

BAN ON LOCKOUTS FAILS TO DECEIVE

Ashton-Under-Lyne, England, May 21.—The government's proposal to make its anti-union bill apply to lockouts as well as to strikes, is declared to be "mere eye-wash" by the Cotton Factory Times.

"In every dispute of a year ago," says this labor paper, "was technically a strike, but virtually it was a lockout. The workers did not declare a lockout. They had no need to. They imposed a wage reduction, well knowing that if they attempting to do so the miners was placed the onus of ceasing work, and probably in most eyes, apart from the workers, they were regarded as the aggressors.

"To make lockouts under any condition illegal, therefore, be a piece of make-believe, and would not add merit to the mischevious bill before the House of Commons.

"The bill was never intended to touch employers—who know pretty well how to look after themselves—and a provision of that kind would only be window dressing."

WAGE SCALE IGNORED BY PAINTER BOSSES

Oakland, Cal., May 21.—Organized painters in this city are asking that employers will recognize a small increase that the Industrial Association ordered months ago, and take similar action Congress will be forced to act.

The Union League Club's resolution sets forth that if a convention were called to deal with prohibition its activities would not be limited, but it would have full power to frame and present to the States for ratification any amendments it might conceive.

"In the opinion of the Union League Club," the resolution continued, "the agitation for repeal of the Federal constitutional convention at this time is a menace to the peace, vested interests and welfare of all the people."

ROCK-DUSTING BILL VETOED BY GOVERNOR

Nashville, Tenn., May 21.—Governor Peay vetoed a bill that requires rock-dusting in mines. The measure passed both branches of the legislature with no opposition. Trade unionists are dumfounded at this unexpected action and declare that the next mine disaster can be laid at the governor's door.

WINNING FIVE-DAY WEEK

Pasadena, Cal., May 21.—Organized painters in this city are winning their five-day movement. Nearly 50 per cent of these workers are employed on that basis.

TEACHERS MAY TALK UNDER STRICT RULE

Superior, Wis., May 21.—High school teachers in this city are asked to agree among their own citizens and to criticise educational methods only in the form prescribed by the board. The contract provides:

"I further recognize and subscribe to the principle that criticism of the policies of the board of education, the superintendent of schools or the principle of the high school should be made only in a professional manner and through the approved professional channels."

WOMEN WAGE WORKERS NEED TRADE UNIONISM

Washington, May 21.—An average wage of $11.10 a week for white women working in 216 factories, stores and laundries of 13 States is reported by the United States Women's Bureau. The average for negro women was $6.96.

The earnings of over one-half of the women fell between $7 and $14, while more than one-fifth of the many women earned less than $7 as were in the group earning $14 or more. Eleven per cent of all industries paid less than $6 a week. The cigar industry, with 22.9 per cent, showed the largest number of women who were paid this wage. The less than $6 rate was paid to 12.2 per cent of laundry workers, 16.7 per cent in woolen goods, 17.8 per cent in women's dresses and aprons, 17.9 per cent in hosiery and 20.8 per cent in miscellaneous wood products.

The percentage of women in all industries earning less than $10 a week was 31.3 per cent, and but one-fourth of the total number received over $15 a week.

An investigation of living conditions of 10,300 women showed that 79 per cent contributed less than 75 per cent with relatives outside their immediate family and 12.1 per cent independently.

"It is indeed a tremendous task," says the report, "that the financial needs of the women who lived independently were not necessarily higher than those of the women who lived at home, for in many cases the women in this latter group are responsible, either partially or entirely, for the support of others."

ANY ORGANIC CHANGE ALARMS BIG BUSINESS

New York, May 21.—Fearing that a Federal constitutional convention would endanger vested interests, the Union League Club of this city expresses disapproval of the agitation for a convention to consider revision of the eighteenth amendment. The club is New York's most conservative and influential organization. For one reason or another 31 States but 6 States have asked for a constitutional convention since 1898. It is now claimed that if additional States apply, a like similar action Congress will be forced to act.

ANTI-UNION POLICY CAUSES HUGE LOSS

Pittsburgh, Pa., May 21.—The eviction of Rev. William G. Nowell, Methodist clergyman, from a house owned by the Pittsburgh Coal Company because he refused to defend a union-smashing policy, again calls attention to this contract-breaking corporation.

"The company's anti-union policy has caused a loss of millions of dollars," said John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, in an address to miners in this field. "In the first three months of this year the company's loss was greater than in the same three months of 1926 or 1925. The company lost $806,000 during the last three months. Their labor turnover for the month of March was approximately 260 per cent. This is the largest labor turnover that has been recorded in the history of the United States or any other country in the world.

"The company employs approximately 350 coal and iron police. The maintenance charge for this force during March exceeded $75,000. Charges for transportation of strikebreakers during the same month was in excess of $80,000.

"The cost of production, including transportation, employment of coal and iron police and the maintenance of the Pinkerton and other detective agencies is in excess of $4 a ton.

"These figures show that the company is suffering more serious losses at the present time than they have at any period in their strikebreaking experience."

MINE BLAST DEATHS IGNORED BY PRESS

Charleston, W. Va., May 21.—Newspapers of this State are printing columns of sob stuff on the heroism of the State mine inspector and officers of the New England Fuel and Transportation Company for their rescue of dead bodies at the mine explosion at Everettsville, where 97 workers lost their lives.

The victims and their dependents are overlooked by the newspapers and little space is given to the causes of the catastrophe or to a discussion of preventative measures.

A correct observance of the State mining laws and proper measures would have prevented this disaster," says the West Virginia Federationist.

"The responsibility rests somewhere, and it is up to the proper State authorities to place that responsibility and to take drastic steps to prevent future accidents. These facts do not seem to be considered by the press or the authorities."

SHOALS BOOM BURSTS, TAX SALES REVEAL

Sheffield, Tenn., May 21.—Delinquent tax sales of property in the vicinity of Muscle Shoals indicate that that boom is over.

A local newspaper advertises 18 columns of delinquent property. More than 90 per cent of these assessments are charged to "owner unknown."

When the Muscle Shoals agitation was at its height people from all over the country bought land in Colbert County.

BAKERS LOCKED OUT

Yonkers, N. Y., May 21.—The Federal System of Bakeries locked out its organized bakery workers. This concern maintained relations with the union for many years.

REJECT NIGHT WORK PLAN

San Francisco, May 21.—A proposed all-night shift was defeated by Bakers' Union No. 24 by a 4-to-1 vote.

GOVERNOR STOPS DEAL TO SMASH LABOR LAW

Charleston, W. Va., May 21.—Governor Gore blocked an attempt by anti-union lawmakers and their political agents to wreck the workmen's compensation law of this State.

The West Virginia House of Delegates accepted amendments to the act that were recommended by a commission and which would strengthen this law.

The Senate altered the amendments by striking out the entire act. The House of Delegates changed front by favoring the Senate amendments, but this time our forces smashed through Governor Gore's veto.

BARBERS SUSPEND WORK

New York, May 21.—Two thousand barbers and beauty shop employes in the north section of the city suspended work to enforce improved conditions. They are affiliated to the Journeymen Barbers' International Union.

COSSACKS FAVORED

Springfield, Ill., May 21.—A State Senate committee has made a favorable report on the Dunlap State Cossack bill. Organized labor defeated this measure at every session since 1919, when it was first proposed.

CARPENTERS' UNITY DEFEATS PROPAGANDA

Cleveland, May 21.—More than 9,000 carpenters have secured a union-shop wage agreement with contractors after nearly three months' negotiations. Rates are advanced 12½ cents an hour. The contractors waived their demand for the anti-union Chicago agreement. While these gains are substantial, the outstanding feature of this movement is the solidarity and discipline of the carpenters. Their officials were subjected to vicious press propaganda for a "house cleaning," and other efforts were made to weaken the workers' spirit of loyalty and divide them into factions for and against their representatives.

MILL MEN REFUSE CUT

Chicago, May 21.—Mill workers affiliated to the Brotherhood of Carpenters were locked out, following their refusal to accept a 10 per cent wage reduction. Six locals are involved. The reduction means a loss of from $1.10 to $1.20 a day.

BRITISH TORIES USE "GAG" SYSTEM TO JAM THROUGH ANTI-UNION BILL

London, England, May 21.—The Labor Party leader in the House of Commons as a protest against the government's decision to limit debate on the pending anti-union bill and force the passage of that measure.

The "gag" motion was presented by Premier Baldwin. As the government has an overwhelming majority, the Labor Party of the House of R. Clynes, well-known trade unionist and member of the House, said the bill is one of the worst pieces of class mansship on record and that the government has so mangled their own proposition that they cannot hope to produce a new one for second reading. Asking the Labor Party to co-operate with the government in this was like asking burglars to co-operate with policemen, he said.

"The bill gives judges and magistrates almost unlimited powet over the unions," said W. M. Citrine, general secretary of the British Trades Union Congress.

Mr. Citrine shows that the bill is filled with undefined terms that must later be passed upon by the courts. "What does 'coercing the government mean?' asked Mr. Citrine. "Does it simply mean influencing the government against its will? What does 'essential portion of the community' mean? Is it a village, a town, or a county, or what? Does it mean the owners of employers' associations and the shareholders of individual firms? Did any government ever dare to make crimes under such generalities? The very essence of criminal law is that a delinquent must be able to know the nature of the crime for which he is charged before he commits it.

The bill is described as the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Bill; it might more properly be called the 'Prevention of Unemployment Among the Lawyers' Bill.' It will undoubtedly result in most costly litigation and will force the unions from their leaders' aims and dissipate their funds. It creates crimes of functions hitherto legitimately exercised by the unions for generations, and yet its terms are such as to make it almost impossible for anyone to say beforehand as to whether he will or will not be guilty of a criminal offense. In the words of Lord Birkenhead (Conservative leader), 'the government, after deep reflection, have taken on what they knew would be a serious and bitter quarrel with the trade unions.'"